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DE RUEHOS #1416 3451608  
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FM AMCONSUL LAGOS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8266  
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA PRIORITY 8107  
INFO RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH AFB UK  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC  
RHMCSUU/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS LAGOS 001416

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DOE FOR GPERSON, CGAY  
TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS, SRENENDER, DFIELDS  
COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS  
STATE PASS USTR FOR ASST USTR SLISER  
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD  
STATE PASS OPIC FOR ZHAN AND MSTUCKART  
STATE PASS TDA FOR NCABOT  
STATE PASS EXIM FOR JRICHTER  
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EPET](#) [ENERG](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: CONFIRMED: MEND HOLDS 4 EXPAT HOSTAGES; NO  
AMERICANS INVOLVED

REF: LAGOS 1408

¶1. (SBU) According to an Agip contact, three Italian and one Lebanese Agip employees remain hostage. According to this interlocutor, no Americans were involved in the December 7 attack near Brass in Bayelsa. Agip stated that a group purporting to be MEND has claimed responsibility for the kidnapping and said the company is negotiating the hostages' release. (Comment: Over the course of the year, several distinct groups have appropriated for themselves the use of the acronym MEND. For now, we have no reason to believe this is the same "MEND" that engineered the January/February kidnappings and oil facility attacks this year. End Comment.)

¶2. (U) MEND released a press statement December 8 claiming anyone associated with oil companies in the Niger Delta is subject to roadside and office bombings. Further, this release said both expatriate and Nigerian workers would be targeted. The statement also demanded the Nigerian government to transfer all ownership interests in the oil industry to communities in the Niger Delta and pay, along with oil companies, Niger Delta inhabitants for "50 years of robbery and enslavement." MEND also maintained its traditional requests that impeached governor Alamieseigha of Bayelsa State and jailed militant leader Dokubo Asari be released and that Shell and others provide payment/compensation for their activities in the Niger Delta.

The MEND press statement gives a list of "political" demands. However, we do not know whether the authors of the statement are also the architects of this most recent hostage-taking. Previously, after such statements have been published, the actual hostage takers have bargained for ransom payments and have not assiduously pursued these political goals.

BROWNE